



MEMORANDUM

TO: MR. TODD STERN, WHITE HOUSE
FROM: KELLY SIMS, SCIENCE POLICY DIRECTOR *KMS*
SUBJECT: SIX MONTH STRATEGY
DATE: JULY 8, 1997

Following are some ideas that would help to establish a public constituency on climate change for the Clinton Administration. It is, quite simply, a public relations campaign. The general public still thinks there is a debate about the science and they still confuse global warming with ozone depletion.

We would broadly recommend that you go local. We have gotten the most traction in US coastal areas (sea-level rise). The President needs to speak about this regularly. You need to continue to send the message that climate change is underway and that the science is clear. You need to convince the American public that by exercising leadership, the US will gain financially through increased exports and more jobs.

We would recommend that you start by re-establishing the science on this issue. 2,500 scientists just recommended immediate reductions in greenhouse gases. 30 of them are National Academy of Science members. They could be invited to an event with the President.

We've brainstormed an "action" list for each of the Cabinet members. I hope this is helpful.

Babbitt: Emphasize the impacts of climate change on national parks and US territories (mostly island states)

Cohen: Chair an interagency task force on oil dependency. For the first time, the US has gone above the 50% mark since the 1970's in oil imports. Reducing our dependency on foreign oil makes sense from a national security perspective as well as encouraging energy conservation and promotion of renewables. Would suggest involving State, CIA, DOE, Treasury, Commerce and Veterans Affairs. Also, do an energy audit of the Pentagon.

- Albright: Needs to deliver a major address on climate. Has not done this yet. Could also try to negotiate a voluntary commitment from developing countries at a high level. Good photo opportunities as you implement the billion dollar in AID projects that President Clinton announced.
- CEA/NEC: Develop an estimate of the financial costs of climate change itself. The interagency economic analysis has not been a true cost/benefit analysis to date.
- Herman: Devise and present an economic justice package for coal miners. This needs to be done soon.
- Daley: Work to improve our export markets for renewable energy (India is now #2 in wind energy exports) via trade missions, benchmarks for percentages of exports and collaboration with those industries who stand to gain substantially from reducing carbon emissions (natural gas, buildings sector, renewables, etc.) Emphasize the job creation potential.
- Pena: Launch a "Race for the Sun" initiative with a challenge to our national labs to innovate for the 21st century a less energy intensive economy.
- Browner: Host a conference of state environmental commissioners on climate change. Several states have now developed "action plans" like Oregon and Massachusetts. Should highlight the success and challenge the laggards.
- Rubin: Meet with the top reinsurance CEOs from Europe and the United States. Have Frank Nutter from the Reinsurance Association of America organize this.
- Shalala: Highlight the health effects of climate change: prepare a new set of standards for what to do in the event of a heat wave or outbreak of vector-borne disease. Maybe attend a 911 training session.
- Riley: Develop standards for educational materials in classrooms (in reference to Joby Warrick's article in the WAPO on how oil companies think teachers are "environmentally biased").
- Glickman: Visit drought-stricken (or flooded) crops and talk about climate change the next time either event happens. Work on urging a precautionary approach with the farming community— an "insurance policy".

HAROLD A. MOONEY
PAUL S. AGHILLES PROFESSOR
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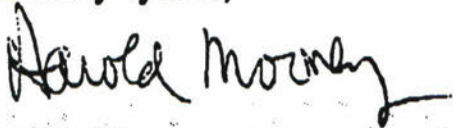
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Stanford Ecologists' Letter

May 21, 1997

President Bill Clinton
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

The accompanying letter comes from a group of ecologists from around the country who have studied the potential impacts of global change on biotic systems, many of whom are the leading international expert on a particular dimension of this problem. As you will read they all have deep concerns about the ecological consequences of rapid climatic change. The letter calls for a "prudent course" that would "limit climate change to the lowest rates feasible given emissions that have already occurred".

Sincerely yours,



Harold Mooney

HAROLD A. MOONEY
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May 21, 1997

President Bill Clinton
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

Ecologists' Statement on the Consequences of Rapid Climatic Change

Climate change driven by emissions of greenhouse gases is projected to occur at a very rapid rate, significantly faster, on a sustained global basis, than rates of climatic change during the past 10,000 years (1). Rapid climate change coupled with pollution, habitat fragmentation and habitat loss may lead to the decline and disappearance of many plant and animal communities that might otherwise survive a future climate that is relatively stable but warmer.

We believe that this situation constitutes a dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, one that may not "allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change" as is called for in the Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992). Accordingly, we believe that the prudent course would be to limit climate change to the lowest rates feasible given emissions that have already occurred. These correspond to global rates of warming of no more than 1 degree C per century.

Much of the current debate over limiting global climate change has focused on targets for stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations many decades in the future. However from an ecological standpoint, it is the *rapid rate* as well as the total magnitude of climate change projected to occur that is pertinent to the future well-being of plant and animal communities and to the continuous availability of goods and services they provide to our society. Global mean temperature could increase by as much as 1-3.5 degrees C (2-6 degrees F), over the next 100 years. At higher latitudes, which include large portions of the United States, temperature increases could be much greater.

Rapid climate change is more dangerous to plant and animal communities than gradual climate change even if the total amount of change that eventually occurs is exactly the same.

During rapid climate change, disturbances like fires, floods, erosion, droughts, storms, pests and pathogen outbreaks may increase with adverse effects on ecosystem functions as important as water supply, soil fertility and carbon sequestration. After disturbance, aggressive, 'weedy' species, including exotics that outcompete native vegetation, may come to dominate these areas. In some US temperate forests, rapid climate change could lead to widespread tree mortality, wildfires and replacement of the forests by grasslands. Species that are long-lived, rare, or endangered will be severely disadvantaged.

In an increasingly developed world, there are fewer and fewer areas available in which native trees and plants can grow. Cities, highways, agricultural fields and other human activities limit available habitat and create barriers to the migration of plants and animals. In fact, many natural areas now can be considered 'islands' in a sea of developed land. Protected areas like national parks and forests were established with current climates in mind. Rapid climate shifts may reduce appropriate native habitats within protected areas while development outside the boundaries of the protected areas would make much of the neighboring new habitat unavailable and limit corridors for species to migrate to suitable new habitats. It would be difficult to imagine, for example, how the imperiled species of Everglades National Park, such as the Cape Sable Sparrow and American Crocodile, could migrate north into the urban and agricultural landscapes of coastal and central Florida and successfully re-establish themselves. Overall, climate change, in combination with existing anthropogenic habitat disruption and loss, could lead to steep declines in worldwide biodiversity.

Furthermore, conditions for plant and animal communities are considerably less hospitable now than prior to the industrial revolution. In many cases, plant and animal populations are less healthy and ecosystems less resilient to further disturbance due to environmental stress from human-made pollutants and habitat degradation. These stresses may reduce significantly an individual's or ecosystem's ability to cope successfully with climate change.

Climate change may also result in rapid sea level rise. Rapid sea level rise causes beach erosion and threatens coastal marshes and mangrove forests. While many of these coastal natural areas have kept pace with historic rates of sea level rise, faster rates may lead to inundation of marshes and mangroves more rapidly than new wetlands can form. Onshore human development will further hamper new establishment of coastal natural areas. Loss of habitat for a substantial number of species of birds, fish, shellfish, microorganisms and animals could result. Marshes and mangroves also protect shorelines from storms and high tides and act as filters for pollutants such as sewage and other

effluents. Their loss would lead to increased erosion and degradation of onshore human development.

It is difficult to quantify precisely the response of a particular species or group of species to climate change. Because there are only sparse records of this type of rapid climate change available, we have little to guide our estimations. Scientists do know the following. Climate determines the distributions of many species. Significant climate change has in the past and will in the future require many species to shift their ranges. Species vary in their ability and opportunities to adapt or migrate. The rate of projected change is enough to threaten seriously the survival of many species. Pollution and human alteration of the landscape have reduced considerably the ability of plant and animal communities to adjust to rapid climate change. Ecosystems will experience a rate of sustained climate change that is unusually rapid and, for many areas, unprecedented during the past 10,000 years. The more rapid that rate, the more vulnerable to damage ecosystems will be.

We are performing a global experiment on our natural ecosystems for which we have little information to guide us. While plant and animal communities may be able to eventually adapt to a stable climate system that is warmer than the existing one, many species may not be able to survive a rapid transition to that new climate. The prudent course would be to limit climate change to the lowest rates feasible given current atmospheric accumulations of greenhouse gases. These correspond to global rates of warming of no more than 1 degree C per century.

(1) *Climate Change 1995 - Impacts, Adaptations and Mitigation of Climate Change: Scientific-Technical Analyses*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Second Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Editors R.T. Watson, M.C. Zinyowera, R.H. Moss. Cambridge University Press, p. 21.

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Ecologists Warn Clinton On Warming They want action to curb emissions

Elliot Diringer, Chronicle Staff Writer

Twenty-one leading ecologists, warning that rapid climate change could wipe out countless species, are calling on President Clinton to back swift action to curb emissions contributing to global warming. Stanford biologist Harold Mooney was the driving force behind the letter, in which the scientists urge a goal of limiting increases in global temperature to no more than 1 degree Celsius -- 2 degrees Fahrenheit -- every 100 years. "We are performing a global experiment on our natural ecosystems for which we have little information to guide us," the ecologists wrote. "While plant and animal species may be able to eventually adapt to a stable climate system that is warmer than the existing one, many species may not be able to survive a rapid transition to that new climate." Atmospheric scientists project that increases in carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases produced by fossil fuel burning and other human activities will nudge up global temperatures from 1 to 3.5 degrees Celsius (2 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit) by the year 2100. The letter, sent to the president Wednesday, comes as the administration prepares for the latest round of negotiations to establish new targets for emissions reductions. A 1992 treaty calls on industrialized countries to reduce emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000, but few nations will meet the target. A new agreement setting targets beyond the year 2000 is to be signed later this year in Japan. The United States favors establishing binding targets but so far has proposed no specific numbers. Some nations are calling for modest or significant reductions, but others advocate allowing emissions to continue rising. The ecologists note in their letter that from a biological standpoint, the pace of climate change may be far more critical than its ultimate magnitude. They warn that at present emission rates, the planet is likely to heat faster than at any time in the past 10,000 years. Apart from increased drought, flooding and disease, they say, such rapid change "could lead to steep declines in worldwide biodiversity." The scientists project that weakened forests would give way to grasslands, that parks and preserves could no longer protect endangered species and that marshes that serve as vital nurseries for marine life would be wiped out. Administration officials could not be reached for comment on the letter, which was signed also by biologists Paul Ehrlich, Steve Schneider and Peter Vitousek of Stanford.

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January 21, 1997

President Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to you as physicians and health professionals concerned about the potentially devastating and possibly irreversible effects of climate change on human health and the environment. We urge you to take prompt and effective actions -- both domestically and internationally -- to achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

There is mounting evidence that climate change, of the scale currently projected, would have pervasive adverse impacts on human health and result in significant loss of life. Potential impacts include increased mortality and illness due to heat stress and worsened air pollution, and increased incidence of vector-borne infectious diseases such as malaria, schistosomiasis and dengue, diseases related to water supply and sanitation, and food-borne illnesses. Expanding populations of pest species, impaired food production and nutrition, and extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, forest fires and windstorms would pose additional risks to human health. Infants, children and other vulnerable populations -- especially in already-stressed regions of the world -- would likely suffer disproportionately from these impacts.

As individuals trained in medicine and science, we strongly support the credibility and integrity of the Second Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released in December 1995. This report concludes for the first time that observed changes in climate are not simply the result of natural variability, but that "the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate." The weight of the evidence and scientific consensus are sufficient to warrant immediate action.

As public health professionals who believe firmly in the wisdom of preventive action, we endorse strong policy measures to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, as called for in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Taking steps

now to prevent disease, illness, and injury will not only diminish the potential for widespread human suffering but reduce the high costs of treating illnesses which might have been avoided.

As citizens of the United States, we understand that our nation has the highest total CO₂ emissions in the world and the highest per capita emissions of any major industrialized country. We recognize an obligation and opportunity for the U.S. to assume leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. U.S. leadership would lend credibility to international negotiations and help build support for the measures necessary to address climate change on a global scale.

We commend the Administration for its recently announced commitment to negotiate an internationally binding and verifiable agreement establishing targets and timetables for meaningful reductions in emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases. We strongly support this position and ask you to ensure that the United States plays a leadership role in moving the international community toward this objective by the end of 1997.

At the same time, we urge you to take immediate action domestically to advance policies designed to increase efficiency in the use and production of energy in the United States, and to accelerate the development and transfer of energy-saving and renewable energy technologies worldwide. Numerous studies, including IPCC's Second Assessment, conclude that such policies can achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions at little or no cost.

Mr. President, the time has come to act. The science is credible, and the potential impacts profound. Prudence -- and a commitment to act responsibly on behalf of the world's children and all future generations -- dictate a prompt and effective response to climate change. We urge you to make this a top priority of your Administration as we move toward the 21st century.

Sincerely,



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RESOLUTION ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Whereas the Second Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined that observed changes in climate are not simply the result of natural variability, but that "the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate;"

Whereas there is growing consensus that climate change on the scale currently projected would have pervasive adverse impacts on human health and result in significant loss of life;

Whereas these effects include increased mortality and illness due to heat stress and worsened air pollution, and increased incidence of vector-borne infectious diseases such as malaria, schistosomiasis and dengue, and diseases related to water supply and sanitation;

Whereas expanding populations of pest species, impaired food production and nutrition, and extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, forest fires and windstorms would pose additional risks to human health;

Whereas infants, children and other vulnerable populations, especially in already stressed regions of the world, would likely suffer disproportionately from these impacts;

Whereas these effects could interact with and multiply the adverse impacts of other ecosystem disruptors, including toxic pollution, increased depletion of stratospheric ozone, habitat fragmentation, and deforestation;

Whereas global climate change would also have profound effects on other species and on ecosystems and the life-support functions they provide;

Whereas numerous studies conclude that increased efficiency in the use and production of energy and accelerated development and transfer of energy-saving and renewable energy technologies worldwide can achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions at little or no cost;

Whereas nuclear energy production poses significant risks to human health arising from reactor operation and radioactive waste transport and disposal, and increases the potential for the proliferation of nuclear weapons;

Whereas the United States has the highest total CO₂ emissions in the world and the highest per capita emissions of any major industrialized country, and has a special obligation to play a leadership role in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions;

Whereas the weight of the evidence and scientific consensus are sufficient to warrant immediate action to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system as called for in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change;

Whereas taking steps now to mitigate climate change would prevent disease, illness and injury, diminishing the potential for wide-spread human suffering, and also reducing the high costs of treating illnesses which might otherwise have been avoided;

Therefore be it resolved that PSR, accepting the credibility and integrity of international scientific consensus on climate change,

Endorses strong policy measures to increase efficiency in the use and production of energy in the United States, favoring the development of non-polluting and sustainable forms of energy production rather than those that pose risks to health and the environment such as fossil fuel combustion and nuclear power;

Endorses, as a matter of U.S. foreign policy, the acceleration of the development and transfer of energy-saving and renewable energy technologies worldwide;

Urges U.S. leadership in concluding an internationally binding and verifiable agreement establishing targets and timetables for meaningful reductions in emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases; and

Supports adequate funding for climate change research programs, including further research on the potential impacts of climate change on human health, and programs to develop and disseminate safe renewable energy technologies.

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FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA

THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND

SEA-LEVEL RISE ON THE EAST COAST

Tour Summary

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